

Chaplain Shea will retire from the Department of the Army June 30, 1999, after thirty-three years of dedicated service. On behalf of my colleagues I wish Chaplain Shea fair winds and following seas. Congratulations on an outstanding career.●

IN RECOGNITION OF JOE BEYRLER

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Joe Beyrle, a World War II veteran and long-time friend from Norton Shores, Michigan. Joe Beyrle's service during the war was truly extraordinary.

As an eighteen-year-old in 1942, Joe Beyrle enlisted in the Army, later volunteering for the parachute infantry. Joe quickly distinguished himself as a member of the 101st Airborne Division stationed in England. Early in his service Joe was twice chosen to make dangerous jumps into Nazi-occupied France while fitted with bandoliers filled with gold for the French Resistance. Joe's last jump into France was on the night before D-Day with the objective of destroying two wooden bridges behind Utah Beach. However, while on his way to accomplish this mission, Joe was captured by the Germans.

On June 10, 1944, the parents of Joe Beyrle received a letter from the United States Government informing them that their son had perished while serving his country in France. On September 17, 1944, family and friends held a funeral mass for Joe at St. Joseph's Church in Muskegon, Michigan. However, Joe was still alive and being held in a POW camp. A dead German soldier wearing an American uniform and Joe's dog tags had been mistakenly identified as Joe.

Joe was eventually able to escape from his captors and later joined a Russian tank unit to continue the fight against the Germans. Joe fought with the Russians until an injury forced him to be sent to a Moscow hospital. When he finally regained his strength, Joe went to the American Embassy in Moscow and was eventually sent back to the United States. On September 14, 1946, almost two years after the funeral mass in his honor, Joe Beyrle married his wife, JoAnne, in the very same church.

I ask to have printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD an article which appeared recently in the Detroit Free Press regarding Joe Beyrle. The article highlights in greater detail the extraordinary experience of Joe Beyrle during World War II. I know my Senate Colleagues will join me in honoring Joe Beyrle on his tremendous sacrifice and service to our nation.

The article follows:

WORLD WAR II VET HOLDS ON TO A SPECIAL APPRECIATION OF LIFE
(By Ron Dzwonkowski)

Memorial Day has to be a little strange for Joe Beyrle, even after all these years. He pays tribute to the nation's war dead knowing that, for a time, he was among them. Even had a funeral with full honors.

"Oh, what parents went through," says Beyrle, (pronounced buy early.) "My mother would never talk about it. My dad wouldn't at first. But I finally talked to him at some length. The emotions . . . well, it was quite a talk."

Beyrle, who will turn 76 this summer and lives in Norton Shores, south of Muskegon, was among the hundreds of thousands of young Americans who enlisted in the Armed Forces to fight World War II. A strapping 18-year-old, he passed up a scholarship to the University of Notre Dame and volunteered in June 1942 for what was then called the parachute infantry.

By September of '43, Beyrle was in England with the 101st Airborne Division.

His commanders must have seen something of the rough-and-ready in the young man from western Michigan, for Beyrle was twice chosen to parachute into Nazi-occupied France wearing bandoliers laden with gold for the French Resistance. After each jump, he had to hide for more than a week until he could be returned to his unit in England.

Then came D-Day. Beyrle's unit jumped into France on the night before the invasion, assigned to disrupt Nazi defenses for the huge frontal assault.

The going was rough. Beyrle saw several planes full of his comrades go down in flames before he hit the silk from 400 feet up, landing on the roof of a church. Under fire from the steeple, he slid down into a cemetery and set out for his demolition objective, two wooden bridges behind Utah Beach.

Beyrle never made it. He was on the loose for about 20 hours while the battle raged on the beaches, and he did manage to blow up a power station and some trucks, slash the tires on the other Nazi vehicles and lob some grenades into clusters of Hitler's finest. But then he crawled over a hedgerow, fell into a German machine gun nest and was captured.

What followed was a long ordeal of brutality and terror as the Germans herded the American POWs inland while being hammered by Allied bombs and artillery. Beyrle was hit by shrapnel, but had to shake it off so he could apply tourniquets to two men whose legs were blown off. He escaped once for about 16 hours, but ran back into a German patrol.

Somewhere in all this chaos, Beyrle lost his dog tags, those little metal necklaces that identify military personnel. They ended up around the neck of a German soldier who was killed in France on June 10, wearing an American uniform, probably an infiltrator.

In early September, the dreaded telegram arrived for Beyrle's parents in Muskegon, the one that includes the nation's "deep sympathy for your loss."

The body believed to be Joe Beyrle was buried in France under a grave marker bearing his name. A funeral mass was held on Sept. 17, 1994, at St. Joseph's Church in Muskegon. Beyrle's name was inscribed on a plaque honoring the community's war dead.

Joe Beyrle, meantime, was being hauled by train all over Europe, locked in about a half-dozen POW camps, beaten, interrogated and nearly starved. But he never quit trying to escape, and finally managed it in January 1945, as the Nazi war machine was starting to crumble under the onslaught of Americans on the west and Russians from the east. Beyrle hooked up with a Russian tank unit and fought with them for a month before he was wounded and shipped to a hospital outside Moscow.

When he was able, Beyrle made his way to the U.S. embassy in the Russian capital, but he had a terrible time convincing officials of his identity, especially since he was listed as dead. He was actually arrested and grew so frustrated that he jumped one of his guards in an attempt to escape.

Fingerprints finally proved that Joe Beyrle was alive and well.

The next telegram to Muskegon carried a much happier message.

On Sept. 14, 1946, Joe Beyrle married his wife, JoAnne, in the same church where his funeral mass was held two years earlier. The same priest presided at both. Almost 53 years later, JoAnne says with a smile that her husband's war stories "get better every year."

This weekend, Beyrle will rejoin the 101st for ceremonies honoring its war dead at Arlington National Cemetery. Then he's off to Europe to walk once again over the ground where he fought and bled for freedom. He will even visit the grave that for months was thought to hold his body.

"Some of them aren't even sure what war I'm talking about," he said. "They really don't understand that I felt it was my duty to volunteer, and what went on and what it was like. I tell them that if it wasn't for what we did, they would all be marching the goose-step today, and the first question is, 'what's the goose-step?'"

"I grew up real fast. We all had to," Beyrle said. "You just learn to believe that somebody up there is looking out for you. . . . I came home with such an appreciation of life, and I don't think I've ever lost it."

He came home with a handful of medals, too, but doesn't consider himself a hero.

"There were 200 guys in my unit that jumped into Normandy, and 50 or 60 were killed in action right there, maybe 40 were wounded; five or six were captured," Beyrle says. "I'm just one of the lucky ones. The heroes are the guys who didn't make it back."●

RETIREMENT OF JOHN P. REZENDES, PRINCIPAL OF EDWARD R. MARTIN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

● Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, on June 21st, family, friends and colleagues will gather to honor John P. Rezendes, who has served East Providence public schools for 30 years, and is retiring as Principal of Edward R. Martin Junior High School.

John Rezendes built his career in Rhode Island, just as he received his education in our state. He graduated from East Providence Senior High School in 1965, received a bachelor's and a master's degree from Providence College, and later pursued additional studies at Rhode Island College.

Over the years, John Rezendes has amassed an impressive record of public service. During his tenure in the East Providence public school system, John has worked with students in a variety of capacities, including as a classroom teacher, a "House Leader," and a principal.

Early in his career, John served as a history and civics teacher at Central Junior High School. In 1977, when a new facility was constructed to replace Central Junior High School, John was one of the first faculty members to occupy this new "four house facility." That same year, he was promoted to House Leader where he continued a close relationship with his students and built a strong working relationship with the teachers he supervised.

In 1983, John was appointed Principal of Riverside Junior High School. In this capacity, he brought many personal touches to the school. His work